

teachers' handbook

Version 3 April 2010



GCSE

Business and Communications Systems

J230 – Full Course

This handbook is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE Business and Communications Systems specification for teaching from September 2009.

This booklet contains the following support materials:

Subject specific guidance

Resource list

Publisher partner resources

Frequently asked questions

Other forms of support.

OCR GCSE
BUSINESS AND
COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEMS

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Introduction

OCR is offering new GCSEs for first teaching in September 2009.

We've taken this opportunity to improve the quality of our GCSEs for teachers and students alike.

We've made improvements in three key areas: updated and relevant content, a focus on developing students' personal, learning and thinking skills, and flexible assessment, so you can choose the best learning approach for the job.

We want to make the introduction of these new GCSEs as easy for you to manage as possible.

The main changes are:

- controlled assessment will be introduced for most subjects;
- the opportunity will be taken to bring course content up to date;
- examinations should provide opportunity for extended writing and more varied question types;
- all GCSEs will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Our approach is to provide consistency across all our GCSEs by offering the flexibility which unitised qualifications bring, allowing teaching and assessment to be either a linear or unitised fashion.

OCR offers a range of support materials, developed following extensive research and consultation with teachers. We've designed them to save you time when preparing for the new specification and to support you while teaching them.

It is important to make the point that this Teacher Handbook plays a secondary role to the specifications themselves. The GCSE Business and Communication Systems specification is the document on which assessment is based: it specifies what content and skills need to be covered. At all times therefore, the Teacher Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Specification. If clarification on a particular point is sought, then that clarification must be found in the Specification itself.

Subject Specific Guidance

Why Study Business and Communication Systems?

First and foremost, all employees today, and for the foreseeable future, are required to communicate with others using ICT and other communication systems.

These people include:

- administrators – generally found in medium to large office or service based organisations (eg council offices, head offices of PLCs);
- anyone who communicates with internal or external stakeholders, eg project managers, consultants, self-employed plumbers, school teachers;
- anyone responsible for the design and management of communications systems, eg senior managers including, but not exclusively, those with direct responsibility for internal and external communications.

These people are increasingly responsible for creating and communicating their own messages, and for choosing both the medium for the message but also the methods/technologies used to create them.

To make informed and appropriate choices these people need practical skills in creating and delivering communications but also an understanding of the factors affecting their choices and their implications, as well as an understanding of the business context within which the communications systems operate. This qualification is intended to enable students to achieve these aims.

Unit A265: Businesses and their Communication Systems

This unit is effectively in two parts. Sections 3.1.1-3.1.5 of the specification cover the business context in which communication systems operate. Sections 3.1.6-3.1.14 cover communication systems themselves. Centres are not required to deliver the unit content in this sequence. The unit is assessed through a timetabled written examination.

The statements in the left hand column of these sections of the specification describe the assessment criteria which will be tested in the A265 examination. Questions may test lower order skills than indicated but not higher ones. For example, 3.1.1 includes: "Describe the main reasons for starting a business". Candidates will not be asked to analyse or evaluate these reasons. Section 3.1.2 requires candidates to "Evaluate the actions a business can take in order to be more competitive than its rivals." Examination questions may also ask candidates to *identify* or *analyse* actions.

Section 3.1.1 is an introduction to business organisations and their role in society. The depth of understanding here is less than is required in a GCSE in Business Studies. Candidates are expected to have a basic understanding of:

- reasons for starting a business;
- how to start a business;
- types of business organisation in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors;
- main functional areas;
- flat and hierarchical organisational structures;
- why some businesses succeed and others fail;
- how and why businesses operate in an uncertain environment;
- what is the role of business in society.

Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 are concerned with competition and customers. The emphasis here is on the actions a business can take to firstly monitor and identify the extent to which it is competitive and meeting the needs of customers and secondly, what it can do to improve its performance.

Section 3.1.4 is an introductory look at ethics, social responsibility and environmental sustainability. For the purposes of this qualification these terms are defined as follows:

Ethics is the study of the moral principles which can be used to judge whether an action is 'right' or 'wrong'.

Social responsibility is the expectation that society (and governments) places on business in terms of required actions and behaviour. For example, businesses in the UK have a social responsibility not to promote certain products to children (eg alcopops). In addition there is an increasing expectation that businesses will promote environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability in its strictest sense means that an organisation should have no residual impact on the environment (ie it recycles 100% of the materials and energy it uses). In practice the term is used to indicate an attempt to minimise environmental impact, and to attempt to rectify any damage caused (eg by carbon offsetting).

Section 3.1.5 covers the main legislation affecting business organisations. Candidates will not be tested on the detail of this legislation. Rather they should develop a broad understanding of the aims of each type of legislation, together with the main implications for business organisations in terms of the compliance actions and overall impact in terms of changed business practices, costs and competitiveness.

Sections 3.1.6 to 3.1.13 cover the main components of business communication systems. The main emphasis is on the systems typically used in a small to medium sized organisation, particularly office-based systems and those used to enable employees to work remotely. In terms of scope, these systems are likely to be used in most if not all schools and colleges. However, candidates should learn about how they are used in a wide variety of organisations and situations, not least because their impact on the organisation and its employees will be different in each case.

These sections list a number of technologies which are used in business organisations. The specification has been written to reflect the technologies which it is expected will be used by business organisations over the next few years. The technologies listed in the 'Examples/guidance' column in the specification are not exhaustive however, and some may be superseded by those which emerge during the life of the qualification. However, it is not the intention to 'catch candidates out' by testing them on new or emerging technologies not included in the specification unless those technologies rapidly become a common feature of everyday life. An example might be in the area of portable computing devices, where netbooks are gaining in popularity at the expense of laptops.

Section 3.1.14 focuses on the systems needed for e-commerce. Again, this section is designed to focus on the generic systems used in e-commerce. For example candidates are not expected to become familiar with the detail of the technologies used to maintain the infrastructure of the World Wide Web. Rather, they should understand what a small business owner might need to do in order to build their own website which is then uploaded to a web-hosting service. The focus should then be on the systems needed by a consumer to interact with the website. This coverage should include how data security can be maintained when transferring data across the WWW. This section could serve as an integrated case study summarising the whole unit. Candidates should aim to understand both the business imperative behind the growth of e-commerce as well as the communication systems that are needed to operate on the WWW.

Unit A266: Developing Business Communication Systems

This unit is assessed through controlled assessment. For details of this assessment please see the Guide to Controlled Assessment in GCSE Business and Communication Systems which is on J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website

The content for this unit includes the background knowledge, as well as the detail, required to complete the controlled assessment tasks. For example section 3.2.8 provides candidates with coverage of the documentation which they need to produce as part of the controlled assessment.

It is not anticipated that the content of this unit will be delivered in a linear way, followed by the controlled assessment. While this is possible, centres might wish to consider using an exemplar, previous year's or adapted controlled assessment tasks, as the context for the learning needed for this unit. Candidates will then be taken through the processes and skills required when undertaking the assessment, at the same time as acquiring the knowledge and understanding covered by the unit.

Each year the controlled assessment issued to centres will comprise two scenarios, each of which will specify a business sector and a stakeholder. Candidates should choose one scenario and for that scenario they should choose a business to investigate from within the specified sector. They should investigate how the business communicates with the specified stakeholder group and make recommendations for improvement.

Candidates should be advised to select a business organisation which will provide them with sufficient opportunities to carry out research. They should also choose specific aspects of its communications to investigate. For example by selecting an organisation which has a website candidates might find that there are specific aspects of the website which could be improved, for example editing an existing page or adding a new section. Generally, candidates will find this assessment more accessible if they investigate one or two specific communications which have taken place between the organisation and one or two specific stakeholders. This assessment is effectively an example of a small scale research project. Candidates might struggle if they choose to investigate all the possible ways in which a large business organisation communicates with a large numbers of a particular group of stakeholders.

Unit A267: ICT Skills for Business Communication Systems

This unit is assessed through a timetabled 1 hour practical ICT examination. Guidance on the practical arrangements for this examination can be found on the J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website.

Candidates will be tested on a range of software skills. These are listed in the specification. However, as also stated in the specification, the minimum software requirement for centres to be able to run this examination is Office 2003, which must include Access, Excel, PowerPoint and Word. Other dedicated applications software, such as for desk top publishing and graphics are not required for the examination, so the assessment of the use of software to create leaflets and edit graphics could all be carried out using the specified programs. For example, the graphics skills listed in the specification could all be carried out within the image editing facilities of Microsoft Word.

In addition to these ICT skills, candidates are also required to demonstrate understanding, analysis and evaluation of the use by business organisations of these types of software as well as a further range listed in the specification. These include: diary management, web-browsers, project planning software and collaborative Web2 applications such as wikis and blogs. This understanding is assessed through the activities carried out during the practical ICT examination in Task 2, where candidates are required to create documents such as a letter or a slide show presentation. These tasks are set in a business context.

Resources

General:

Banks, Harber-Stuart and Parry: *GCSE Applied ICT*: Folens

GCSE Business and Communication Systems – The Revision Guide: CGP

GCSE Business and Communication Systems – Workbook: CGP

Glynis Frater: *Business and Communication Systems GCSE - Student Book*: Nelson Thornes

Harber-Stuart and Rees: *OCR GCSE Business and Communication Systems*: Hodder

GCSE Business & Communication Systems PuzzlePack: Tutor2U.net

www.iwchameleon.net/bacs/index.html

www.what2learn.com (free registration required)

Unit A265: Businesses and their Communication Systems

The 'General' resources plus:

Anderton and Jones: *GCSE Business Studies: OCR Version*: Causeway Press

Denby and Thomas: *GCSE in Applied Business*: Hodder

GCSE Business Studies Revision Guide and Workbook: CGP

GCSE Success Business Studies Revision Guide and Workbook: Letts

The Plumstones Available from the office of the Information Commissioner: www.ico.gov.uk

The Times 100 www.times100.co.uk

www.ictgcse.net

Unit A266: Developing Business Communication Systems

The 'General' resources plus:

Doyle: *ICT For You*: Nelson Thornes

The Times 100 (www.times100.co.uk)

Unit A267: ICT Skills for Business Communication Systems

The 'General' resources plus:

Cushing, Parry, Patel, Kelsall and Manson: *ICT for OCR National Level 2 Student Book: Unit 1 ICT skills for business and Unit 21 Creating computer graphics*: Payne-Gallway

Doyle: *ICT For You*: Nelson Thornes

GCSE ICT – The Revision Guide and Workbook: CGP

GCSE Success ICT Revision Guide and Workbook: Letts

www.ictgcse.net

Other Forms of Support

In order to help you implement the new GCSE Business and Communication Systems specification effectively, OCR offers a comprehensive package of support. This includes:

Published Resources

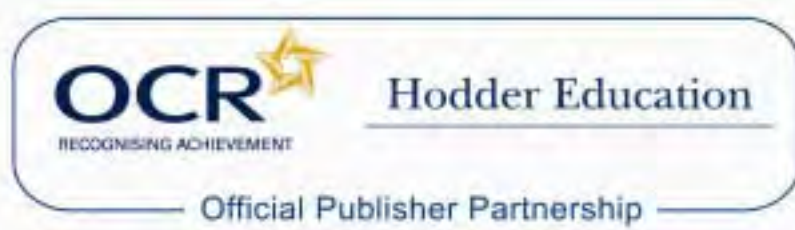
OCR offers centres a wealth of quality published support with a fantastic choice of 'Official Publisher Partner' and 'Approved Publication' resources, all endorsed by OCR for use with OCR specifications.

Publisher partners

OCR works in close collaboration with three Publisher Partners; Hodder Education, Heinemann and Oxford University Press (OUP) to ensure centres have access to:

- better published support, available when you need it, tailored to OCR specifications;
- quality resources produced in consultation with OCR subject teams, which are linked to OCR's teacher support materials;
- more resources for specifications with lower candidate entries;
- materials that are subject to a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement.

Hodder Education is the publisher partner for OCR GCSE Business and Communication Systems.



Hodder Education is producing the following resources for OCR GCSE Business and Communication Systems for first teaching in September 2009, which will be available in June 2009.

OCR GCSE Business and Communication Systems

Colin Harber-Stuart and Nina Rees

ISBN: 978 0340 98443 7

Published: 26/06/2009

Approved publications

OCR still endorses other publisher materials, which undergo a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement. By offering a choice of endorsed materials, centres can be assured of quality support for all OCR qualifications.



Endorsement

OCR endorses a range of publisher materials to provide quality support for centres delivering its qualifications. You can be confident that materials branded with OCR's "Official Publishing Partner" or "Approved publication" logos have undergone a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement. All responsibility for the content of the publisher's materials rests with the publisher.

These endorsements do not mean that the materials are the only suitable resources available or necessary to achieve an OCR qualification. Any resource lists which are produced by OCR shall include a range of appropriate texts.

OCR Training

A full range of training events provide valuable support, for the delivery and assessment of OCR qualifications:

Get Ready...

An overview of new OCR specifications

Get Started...

For teachers preparing to deliver or already delivering OCR specifications

Get Ahead...

For teachers wanting to improve delivery and assessment of a current OCR specification

Lead the way...

To encourage creativity and innovation

View up-to-date event details and make online bookings at www.ocreventbooker.org.uk or view our new training e-books at www.ocr.org.uk/training. If you are unable to find what you are looking for contact us by e-mail training@ocr.org.uk or telephone 02476 496398.

e-Communities

Over 70 e-Communities offer you a fast, dynamic communication channel to make contact with other subject specialists. Our online mailing list covers a wide range of subjects and enables you to share knowledge and views via email.

Visit <https://community.ocr.org.uk>, choose your community and join the discussion!

Interchange

OCR Interchange has been developed to help you to carry out day to day administration functions online, quickly and easily. The site allows you to register and enter candidates online. In addition, you can gain immediate a free access to candidate information at you convenience. Sign up at <https://interchange.ocr.org.uk>

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Who is the specification aimed at?

This specification is aimed at all candidates who wish to develop their understanding of business communication systems, the business environment, and apply their ICT skills and capability to this area.

Do I have to be a business teacher/ICT teacher?

While, as with any qualification, it is preferable that subject specialists deliver a course, this is not a formal requirement. However, teachers need to have a broad appreciation of how ICT is used in a business context.

How much 'business studies' is included in the new specification?

Candidates are required to show an understanding of the business context within which communication systems operate. Broadly speaking, candidates should have an awareness of how the aims of an organisation (profitability and other objectives) and its external environment (eg competition and customers) affect its actions. The specification provides details of the knowledge, understanding and skills required.

How much ICT is included in the new specification?

Candidates are required to be able to create and edit documents for a business purpose and audience. The scope and depth of coverage is broadly consistent with the Functional Skills requirements at Levels 1 and 2, in a business context.

Do my students need to have studied Key Stage 3 ICT before beginning this qualification?

It is not a requirement to have previously studied the National Curriculum Programme of Study for ICT at Key Stage 3. However, candidates beginning this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

Is it OK to just look at communication systems which operate in my school?

While it is true that, in terms of complexity and scope, the systems in use in a typical school or college should enable the specification content to be covered, candidates should gain an understanding of how communication systems are used in a variety of profit and not-for profit organisations.

Do students need to know how to use industry standard software?

Students should be familiar by the end of this specification with the main software used in 'office' software such as Microsoft Office and Star Office. Candidates are not expected to use 'industry standard' software for applications such as Desk Top Publishing, HTML creation or multimedia applications (eg Flash). However, in order to gain an understanding of how ICT is used in business organisations, centres may wish to explore other types of software applications and programs. This should not be to the detriment of the requirements of the external assessment of Unit A267: ICT Skills for Business Communication Systems.

What are the main ICT skills which I need to teach?

Candidates should be able to create and edit documents which are used in a business context. This includes memorandums, notices of meetings, agendas, leaflets, letters (including mail-merged), brochures, reports, spreadsheets (single worksheet), databases (flat-file), web-pages, and presentations. Candidates should be able to select and manipulate graphics. The scope and depth of ICT skills are consistent with Functional Skills in ICT at Levels 1 and 2. Details of the precise requirements are contained in the specification.

Unit Specific Questions

Unit A265: Businesses and their Communication Systems

Is this a compulsory unit?

This unit is compulsory for a GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

What is this unit worth?

This unit is worth 50% of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.

What is the entry code for this unit?

The entry code for this unit is A265.

How is this unit assessed?

This unit is assessed through a 90 minute written examination paper. The examination is set and marked by OCR.

When is this unit available for assessment?

This unit is only available for assessment in June series from June 2010.

Is the examination tiered?

No. All candidates take the same examination.

Will candidates be able to re-sit the unit?

Yes. Candidates may re-sit this unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE.

Is there a text book for this unit?

Yes. The recommended text book is *OCR Business and Communication Systems for GCSE* published by Hodder. This book covers all three units of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

Is there training available for this unit?

Yes. OCR provide a full programme of training for Business and Communication Systems (J230). Details are available on the OCR website.

Unit A266: Developing Business Communication Systems

Is this a compulsory unit?

This unit is compulsory for a GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

What is this unit worth?

This unit is worth 25% of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.

What is the entry code for this unit?

The entry code for this unit is A266. Candidates' work can be submitted electronically using the OCR Repository (entry code A266/01) and in hard copy using postal moderation (entry code A266/02). Please refer to Section 6.1 and Appendix B of the Specification.

How is this unit assessed?

This unit is assessed through controlled assessment. Tasks are issued annually by OCR on Interchange, marked by centres and moderated by OCR. For more details of this assessment please see the *Guide to Controlled Assessment in GCSE Business and Communication Systems* which can be found on the J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website.

When is this unit available for assessment?

This unit is only available for assessment in June series from June 2010.

Is the unit tiered?

No. All candidates use the same controlled assessment tasks.

Will candidates be able to re-sit the unit?

Yes. Candidates may re-sit this unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE.

Is there a text book for this unit?

Yes. The recommended text book is *OCR Business and Communication Systems for GCSE* published by Hodder. This book covers all three units of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

Is there training available for this unit?

Yes. OCR provide a full programme of training for Business and Communication Systems (J230). Details are available on the OCR website.

What is 'controlled' in the controlled assessment?

Broadly speaking, OCR controls the tasks carried out by candidates and the conditions under which the tasks are taken as well as the external moderation of marked work. Centres are responsible for administering the assessments, ensuring the controlled conditions are met, then for marking and internally moderating the completed assessments. Candidates must complete the tasks under controlled conditions (eg restricted interaction with other candidates, no access to external sources of information other than their own research notes) but are free to undertake research under less restricted controlled conditions. Further details are available in the *Guide to Controlled Assessment in GCSE Business and Communication Systems* which can be found on the J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website.

When will the Controlled Assessment tasks be issued to centres?

There will be a new set of controlled assessments issued each year at the beginning of June through OCR Interchange.

When can I issue the Controlled Assessment tasks to my students?

The controlled assessment tasks can be issued to candidates at the centres discretion, while remaining mindful of the requirements of controlled assessment.

Where can I obtain further details about the controlled assessment?

Details of the learning required for the controlled assessment unit are contained in the specification. For more details of this assessment please see the *Guide to Controlled Assessment in GCSE Business and Communication Systems*. This Guide, together with specimen controlled assignments and exemplar materials have been produced and are available on the J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website.

Unit A267: ICT Skills for Business Communication Systems

Is this a compulsory unit?

This unit is compulsory for a GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

What is this unit worth?

This unit is worth 25% of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.

What is the entry code for this unit?

The entry code for this unit is A267.

How is this unit assessed?

This unit is assessed through a 60 minute practical ICT examination. It is a **timetabled** examination which is set and marked by OCR.

When is this unit available for assessment?

This unit is available for assessment in both January and June series from January 2010.

Is the examination tiered?

No. All candidates take the same examination.

Will candidates be able to re-sit the unit?

Yes. Candidates may re-sit this unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE.

Is there a text book for this unit?

Yes. The recommended text book is *OCR Business and Communication Systems for GCSE* published by Hodder. This book covers all three units of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems (J230).

Is there training available for this unit?

Yes. OCR provide a full programme of training for Business and Communication Systems (J230). Details are available on the OCR website.

What software will candidates be tested on during the practical ICT examination for this unit?

The A267 practical ICT examination will require candidates to create and edit documents using: Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint. Any files for the examination will be delivered to centres, based on centre entries, through OCR Interchange in a proprietary format (eg **.mdb** not **.csv**).

Where can I obtain further details of the practical examination for this unit?

Details of the learning required for the A267 practical ICT examination are contained in the specification. Guidance on the practical arrangements for this examination can be found on the J230 GCSE Business & Communication Systems pages of the OCR website. A specimen examination paper and exemplar materials have been produced which is also available on the OCR website.

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

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